## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FEDERAL GRANT TO AID NEW JERSEY OYSTER INDUSTRY

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and New Jersey Governor Richard J. Hughes today announced the signing in Washington of a \$200,000 contract under which intensive efforts will be made to restore the State's oyster industry.

New Jersey thus becomes the first State to receive a Federal grant under Section 4 (a) of Public Law 88-309, known as the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act of 1964, which is administered by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Under the contract, the State is matching the \$100,000 provided by Federal funds.

The New Jersey oyster industry, once valued at more than \$10 million annually was virtually destroyed in 1957-58 by a shellfish disease known as MSX. Research has shown that a small percentage of the residual oysters may be immune to the disease and by using these survivors as seed, the State hopes to revive the industry in Delaware Bay and the Mullica River.

New Jersey Commissioner of Conservation and Economic Development Robert A. Roe said that 2 million bushels of oyster shells will be purchased to improve the setting areas during the present oyster spawning season. It is planned to provide at least a million bushels of shells for this purpose each year for the following five years.

The initial planting of shells will be completed in August, and sample tests of the spawning results will begin in September. All work will be supervised by the Director of the New Jersey Division of Shell Fisheries in conjunction with the Shell Fisheries Council, and the Oyster Research Laboratory of Rutgers--the State University.